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Farm Broadcasters Letter

United States Department of Agriculture Office of Information Radio-Television Division Washington D.C. 20250 (202) 447-4330

Letter No. 2412

May 12, 1989



ON THE HILL -- Secretary of Agriculture Clayton Yeutter, Chairman of the House Committee on Agriculture Kika de la Garza and Deputy Secretary of Agriculture Jack Parnell confer before Yeutter's May 10 testimony before the committee. During his testimony, Yeutter discussed the general state of U.S. agriculture and outlined his ideas for the 1990 farm bill. (Photo by Keith Jewell)

"ONE OF OUR OBJECTIVES next year," Yeutter said, "should be to reduce the rigidity of our present programs. Farmers want and deserve more flexibility."

Yeutter also said the 1990 farm bill should:

- reconsider target price relationships;
- find ways of saving money without unilaterally disarming in the international marketplace;
- eliminate large annual acreage reduction programs;
- avoid the chaos and additional cost of supplementing crop insurance with emergency disaster programs;
- make price and income support programs less complicated;
- pay attention to environmental issues; and
- devote more attention to food safety.



75TH ANNIVERSARY OF EXTENSION SERVICE -- Sec. Clayton Yeutter helped USDA's Extension Service begin its 75th anniversary celebration May 8 by participating in a live national videoteleconference. Extension Service Information Director Janet Poley moderated the event, which originated at USDA's Teleconference Center. (USDA Photo) Contact: Judith Bowers (202) 447-4241.

FARMER MAC is making a lot of news. What is Farmer Mac, anyway? The Agricultural Credit Act of 1987 (enacted Jan. 6, 1988) restructured federal credit help for farmers. One of the things the act did was to create a secondary market for farm mortgages. Proponents say this market may increase borrower access to long-term credit at reasonable interest rates. "Prospects for a Secondary Market for Farm Mortgages" discusses Farmer Mac in detail. Call Marci Hilt (202) 447-6445 for a copy.

ROOT VIDEOS A HIT -- A tiny video camera is helping USDA scientists spy on palt roots in farm fields. Here's how it works: scientists attach a pocket-sized color video camera to a pipe and lower it into the ground through a clear plastic tube. Using time-lapse photography, they can watch the roots. The scientists have also watched how roots respond to drought. Contact: Dan R. Upchurch (806) 746-5353.

1989 YEARBOOK OF AGRICULTURE -- The 1989 Yearbook of Agriculture will be titled: "Farm Management: How to Achieve Your Farm Business Goals." It's at the type-setter now and is scheduled for release in November at \$2 a copy.

RISK ASSESSMENT -- American consumers, battered by a torrent of reports about the hazards of what they eat, have become engulfed in an epidemic of fear, the Washington Post reported recently. Scientists generally say Americans too often over-react to the most trivial of risks while ignoring much more substantial threats to their health or safety. The vast majority of premature deaths in the U.S. are caused by: alcohol, tobacco and eating too much saturated fat. Any person in the U.S. is thousands of times more likely to die of a household accident or car wreck than of cancer caused by pesticides in food. But, in Post interviews with 25 shoppers buying organic produce, nearly half said they hadn't worn seat belts on the drive to the store. Contact: Bruce Ames (415) 642-5165.

FROM OUR RADIO SERVICE

AGRICULTURE USA #1665 -- Having trouble keeping your home or farm records organized? Brenda Curtis talks with an expert on how to file with style. (Weekly 13-1/2 min. documentary)

AGRITAPE #1655 -- USDA News Highlights, farm price support loans, heptachlor survey, farm fuel prices on the rise, a better dairy year? (Weekly reel of news features)

CONSUMER TIME #1147 -- Why file? File organization made easy; food prices on the rise; who's fishin' who?; restaurants and retirees. (Weekly reel of 2-1/2 - 3 min. features)

USDA RADIO NEWSLINE -- Wed., May 17, cattle on feed; Thurs. May 18, Soviet outlook; Fri., May 19, U.S. ag outlook; Mon., May 22, catfish production, wheat outlook; Tues., May 23, poultry production, crop/weather update; Wed., May 24, ag income/finance outlook; Thurs., May 25, world sugar outlook, U.S. feed outlook, foreign ag trade update; Fri., May 26, export outlook; Wed., May 31, ag prices, crop/weather update, cotton & wool, world tobacco situation.

DIAL THE USDA RADIO NEWSLINE (202) 488-8358 or 8359.
Material changed at 5 p.m. EDT each working day.

FROM OUR TELEVISION NEWS SERVICE

AGRICULTURAL UPDATE and USDA NEWS SERVICE are available on satellite Westar IV, audio 6.2 or 6.8:

THURSDAY 7:30-7:45 p.m., EDT, Transponder 12D

SATURDAY 10:30-11:15 a.m., EDT, Transponder 10D

MONDAY 8:30-9:15 a.m., EDT, Transponder 12D
(Repeat of Saturday transmission)

OFF MIKE

SECTIONS...of Minnesota continue to be dry, extending last year's drought says Al Carstens (KATE, Albert Lea, Minn.), especially in west central portions. Elsewhere topsoil is OK, corn is 50 percent in, but subsoil moisture is not adequate. Al says a worry not related to rain is sale of a local meat processing plant to an out of state company; 500 jobs may be involved.

CROP YEAR...is off to a good start says Gene Ragan (WTVY/Ragan Farm Net, Dothan, Ala.). Ample rain has helped crops generate early growth. Gene keeps in touch with local developments producing his 15 radio programs and 11 TV programs each week. Says to his knowledge he has the second oldest continuously scheduled agriculture TV program, in its 31st year. Gene has been in farm radio for 36 years.

AG BUSINESS...is up says Kathie Gier (KART, Jerome Idaho). Commodity prices, land values and local reservoirs are all higher. Producers looking forward to a good year.

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Radio and Television, Rm. 410-A
Office of Information, OGPA
U.S. Department of Agriculture
Washington, D.C. 20250-1300

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ISSUES AND ANSWERS...panel at the Northeast Region Nat'l Assn. of Farm Broadcasters was a success. Four speakers discussed their area of expertise and were available for interviews. Congratulations to N.E. Region V.P. Joe Cornely (WRFD, Columbus, Ohio) and Bob and Pat Driscoll (WPZA, Ann Arbor, Mich.) and Spring Meeting Committee members for an excellent agenda.

IMPROVING...the perception of agricultural product safety was one of the themes at the Northeast meeting. Luther Markwart (American Sugar Growers Association) said he requested apple juice during a recent airline flight. A woman seated across the aisle holding a double martini took a drag on her cigarette and said, "You know that stuff will kill ya." Brought the house down. Point made, there's work to be done.



VIC POWELL, Chief, Radio and Television Division